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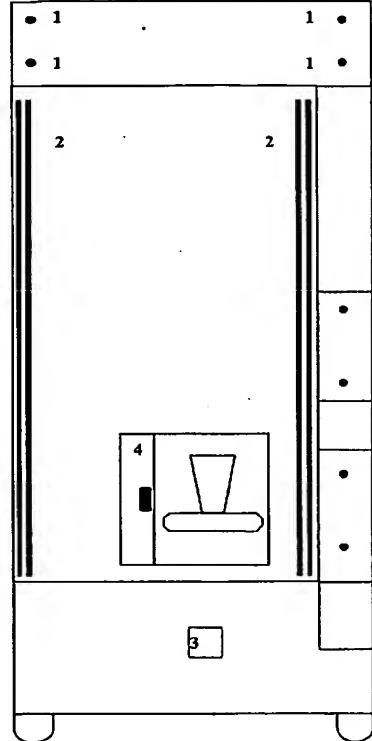
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(54) Title: PRODUCT CUSTOMIZATION KIT AND METHOD OF CUSTOMIZING

Vending Machine Chassis that has not been Customized (Front View)



(57) Abstract: Surface customization methods, apparatus, and kits for improving the aesthetic and functional characteristics of a product, particularly vending machines, are provided. The kit includes one or more panels, which feature built-in installation guides illustrating the proper installation of the one or more panels to a chassis, and attachment structures for affixing said panels to said chassis. The panels and attachment structures allow the external appearance of the product to be reversibly altered without causing damage to the underlying chassis. The method includes the steps of providing one or more decorative panels for attachment to a chassis, providing attachments selected from the group consisting of bolts, screws, nails, rivets, brackets, retaining trim, magnetic fasteners, retaining clips and receptacles, captive fasteners, mating fasteners, spring clips, cotter pin assemblies, ball and socket fasteners, ball stud and retainer systems, "Christmas-tree" clips, clamps, reclosable fasteners, interlocking fasteners, glues, cements, caulks, double-sided adhesives, transfer adhesives, structural adhesives, catalyzed adhesives, pressure-sensitive adhesives, heat-activated adhesives, putties, velcro, and static-cling systems, and applying the one or more decorative panels to the chassis using the attachment means in a manner such that the decorative panels are affixed independently of the exterior shape and dimensions of the chassis. Because the customization methods, apparatus, and kits are independent of the underlying product, the customization can be applied to any area of the chassis, which may have any shape or size, without special tools or training.

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